

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-10, 12-15, 17-20, 22-32, 34, 36-39, 41-44, 46-49, 51-53, 55, and 57 are now pending in the application. Claims 54 and 56 have been cancelled. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 AND 103

Claims 1-2, 4-5, 7-10, 12-15, 17-18 and 22-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kanda (U.S. Pat. No. 5,649,710, hereinafter "Kanda"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-2, 4-5, 7, 10, 12, 14-15, 17, 18-20, 22-25, 26-32, 34, 36-39, 42-44, 47-49 and 51-57 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Heinzen (U.S. Pat. No. 5,201,529, hereinafter "Heinzen"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 8, 13, 41 and 46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Heinzen in view of Kanda. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

At the outset, Applicant notes that claims 1 and 26 have been amended to include the limitations of claims 54 and 56, respectively. As such, the only rejection to the claims remaining is the §102(b) rejection in view of Heinzen. In his rejection of claims 54 and 56, the Examiner notes: "[t]he faceplate having an axially inner surface (16a), the first elastomeric protrusion extending between the radially extending sleeve portion and the axially inner surface of the faceplate. The first elastomeric protrusion end contacts the axially inner surface of the faceplate." Applicant respectfully disagrees

with this interpretation. Rather, it appears that what the Examiner considers “axially inner surface 16a” is an axially outer surface, as it faces air side A, not oil side O in Figure 1 of Heinzen.

Claims 1 and 26 have been further amended to clarify this distinction. The claims now recite “the faceplate portion disposed axially outwardly of the radially extending sleeve portion relative to a lubricant side of the seal and including an axially inner surface generally facing the lubricant side.” The amendment to claims 1 and 26 further specifies “a first elastomeric protrusion extending between the radially extending sleeve portion and the axially inner surface of the faceplate portion.” As indicated above, Heinzen appears to teach the opposite, with what the Examiner considers the “faceplate portion” disposed axially inwardly of the radially extending sleeve portion 212 and the axially outer surface 16a facing away from oil side O. As a result, the portion considered “first protrusion 221” by the Examiner extends between radially extending sleeve portion 212 and axially outer surface 16a of the portion considered the faceplate by the Examiner. As such, Applicant submits that the Examiner’s rejection based on Heinzen has been overcome and claims 1 and 26 are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 2, 4-5, 7-10, 12-15, 17-18, 20, 22-25, and 55 depend from claim 1 and claims 27-32, 34, 36-39, 41-44, 46-49, 51-53, and 57 depend from claim 26, and should therefore be in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth above. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-2, 4-5, 7-10, 12-15, 17-18, 20, 22-25, 26-32, 34, 36-39, 41-44, 46-49, 51-53, 55, and 57 are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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